

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 198

IR 010 434

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 TITLE ID in School Media Centers: Possible or Probable? A Position Paper.
 PUB DATE 7 Apr 81
 NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (Philadelphia, PA, April 7, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Change Agents; Change Strategies; Definitions; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Design; *Instructional Development; *Learning Resources Centers; Library Role; *Media Specialists; Staff Role; Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Widespread instructional development (ID) activity in school media centers will remain more an ideal than a reality until school media specialists are knowledgeable in instructional development processes, are convinced that instructional development leads to optimum integration of media resources and instruction, and make instructional development activities a priority. Reasons for minimal instructional development activity by school media specialists include (1) few articles in professional literature directed to school media specialists; (2) ambiguity in instructional development definitions; (3) little indication of the parameters of the instructional development role for school media specialists; and (4) lack of acceptance of the instructional development role. Findings of three studies indicate the impact on instructional development activity of other variables such as media resources available and teacher/administrator perceptions. A chart of helping or hindering forces derived from these studies and an 18-item reference list are included in this paper. (Author/LMM)

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ED222198

ID in School Media Centers: Possible or Probable?

A Position Paper

AECT Showcase of Achievement
Philadelphia, PA
April 7, 1981

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Until school media specialists achieve competency in ID, are convinced that it is the cornerstone of optimum integration of media resources with instruction, and are committed to making it a priority, ID at the K-12 levels will remain only a possibility.

Such facile statements, suggesting that the entire responsibility for change lies with building-level practitioners, are not too likely to emanate from that sector. Perhaps the obligation for moving ID in school media centers from possibility to probability lies instead with those who can answer the questions, "What is it?, why is it?, and what will it do for me?"

Studies by Jetter (1972) and Pearson (1974) predicted that the instructional development role of the media specialist would be the major trend and emphasis of school media centers of the future. For over a decade, textbooks have included the concept of ID. Media Programs: District and School (ALA/AECT, 1975, p. 37) specifically provided for ID at K-12:

Development of effective media programs at district and school levels requires an understanding of user needs and interests and instructional design [underline by authors], a clear definition of program goals and objectives, and a knowledge of available and needed resources.

While no one ever expected overnight acceptance, the projected impact of ID in school media centers is not yet apparent. The reasons for this may be as varied as the individual schools in which media specialists are employed and the training programs through which they are certified.

One major factor which becomes apparent in even a cursory literature search is that school media practitioners are not being reached. As is so often the case with professionals, instructional developers talk

mainly to each other. A wealth of literature exists on the ID process in journals such as JID and ECTJ, but, with the exception of the Instructional Innovator, little has appeared in other publications frequently read by school media specialists, such as School Library Journal and School Media Quarterly.

Problems which emerge in reading the small body of literature which has been directed toward in-service school media specialists include ambiguity in definitions of instructional design and instructional development, the assignment of the ID function to the media program with scant attention to the re-thinking of role and the re-training necessary for practitioners (Hug, 1975), and a lack of articulation concerning the extent to which the school media specialist can assume the role as opposed to, for example, full-time ID professionals in industry or higher education.

Assuming that the distribution of Media Programs: District and School is widespread and that most school media specialists have access to it, it must be faulted for obscuring ID by describing the processes, but making only two direct references to it other than the definitions at the end of the publication. Those definitions, pages 112-113, which may be more confusing than enlightening, are:

Instructional Design. The formulation and selection of management systems for instructional development.

Instructional Development. The solution of instructional problems through the design and application of instructional systems and their components.

While the second definition is conceptually aligned with that in the more recent The Definition of Educational Technology (AECT, 1977, p. 161),

instructional development. A systematic approach to the design, production, evaluation, and utilization of complete systems of instruction, including all appropriate components and a management pattern for using them; instructional development is larger than instructional product development, which is concerned with only isolated products, and is larger than instructional design, which is only one phase of instructional development.

the first is not. Chisholm and Ely (1979, p. 3) define instructional design as

the process of selecting, planning, and using instructional strategies and media based on instructional objectives.

In The Definition of Educational Technology, the definition of instructional design requires further reading to determine that the outcomes suggested are: Design of programmed instructional materials, development of instructional modules for individualized instruction, design of equipment systems, writing of general objectives, determination of medium, description of technical systems, analysis of objectives, synthesis of objectives/sequence/content/media, and arrangement of materials in sequence. The definition itself, however, does point out that instructional design is "not synonymous with, though often confused with, instructional development and instructional product development."

An opportunity to clarify and promote ID was lost in the descriptive section outlining the functions of the media center in Media Programs: District and School for ID activities are subsumed within the design, consultation, and information functions. Additionally, just following an explanation of the design function which clearly outlines the activities of instructional design, the statement is made that "...In this context media professionals initiate and participate in curriculum design." (AIA/AECT, pp. 6-7)

Along with the instructional design/development definition problem is the fact that the parameters of the ID role of the school media specialist are not clearly defined. Few persons are eager to assume new

roles which lack preciseness. Is the media specialist an instructional designer and a member of the instructional development team? Or, as has been suggested in some of the literature, is the school media specialist to assume the responsibilities of an instructional developer? The recently-published "Competencies for Instructional Development Specialist" (Instructional Innovator, December, 1980) do not clarify the limits of the role since, even if the media specialist achieved all the suggested competencies, implementation of all of them may be unattainable given the multiple responsibilities of school media center professionals.

Tantamount to a clear understanding of ID and the role expectations for school media specialists it involves is the conviction that ID is a vital and viable part of the school media program. A strong rationale for the active participation of media specialists in ID is essential to the incorporation of such activity in the media program. Why have ID at K-12? If it is accepted as the "energizer" which can not only move the media center from its traditional support role into the mainstream of instruction, but can also provide creative lateral growth for media specialists, the possibility of ID in school media centers becomes more of a probability.

Some of the most germane statements from the literature concerning the "why" follow:

For many years we have talked about the three R's-getting the right material to the right place at the right time. We must now add a fourth R-to help the teacher and learner to use the media in the right way. It is possible that many of the functions which are now performed by traditional librarians and audiovisual specialists can be handled by clerks and technicians. Therefore, in order to justify a professional position, it is incumbent upon library media professionals to use the talents which they have to become active members of the instructional team.
(Chisholm and Ely, 1979, p. 6)

By developing and implementing curricular programs which utilize a variety of different media formats, library media specialists can demonstrate that important link between media and curriculum, between media and learning, between media centers and classrooms. Media can be an integral part of the educational program. (Sullivan, 1980, p. 256)

The development of the media specialist in [instructional and curricular design] must be considered essential since it is in the design of the instruction that his or her expertise in the selection and utilization of the instructional medium is most effectively transmitted. (Willis, 1980, p. 138)

Librarians are encouraged to move away from their outdated image as "checker outer, booker, and housekeeper," to view themselves as media specialists with a role to play "...in identifying the most effective means for the dissemination of different kinds of messages to serve different audiences." (Hodson, 1979, p. 37)

Once convinced that the rationale for ID at K-12 levels is a valid one, whether through the literature or through efforts of professional organizations, obvious places for the school media specialist to gain knowledge about ID and its potential are in certification programs and master's degree programs and through professional organizations and in-service training.

Although the extent of ID offerings in certification programs is largely unknown, a national study by Philip M. Turner of courses included in master's degree programs is nearing completion. The results of a pilot study sent to 43 master's level school library/media programs at library schools in the Southeast showed that, of the 37 respondents, 29 reported a course in instructional design available somewhere within their institutions, 19 reported a course within the library school, but only 13 programs required such a course (Turner and Stone, 1980, p. 201).

The professional organization which has focused the most attention on ID is AECT, specifically the Division for Instructional Development. In a survey of DID membership in the spring of 1978, 92 members

from public schools and 8 from private schools responded, 12.1% and 1.0% respectively, out of a total of 762 returns (Naumer, 1978, p. 214). In spite of a reasonable percentage of membership, however, most DID programming has been directed toward full-time ID professionals in the university, business, industrial, and medical sectors.

Extensive training was given by the Instructional Development Institutes (IDI) of the University Consortium for Instructional Development and Technology (UCIDT) from 1971-74 when, with USOE grant support, IDI's were given in over 350 school systems in 45 states. Additionally, teacher education agencies in 34 states had trained teams assisting in the overall effort (UCIDT, n.d.). While the impact of the IDI's on school media centers is unknown, it should be noted that modules developed by UCIDT are available from the national office at the University of Southern California. No large-scale survey has been located which measures the extent of in-service training conducted by school districts.

While all of the foregoing - not reaching school media specialists with ID concepts and presenting a convincing rationale through appropriate journals, confusion in definitions and role, and "unknowns" in the amount of ID training targeted for them - have been at least partially responsible for ID remaining primarily a possibility, three studies give some insights into building-level factors which are either helping or hindering forces. They are by Kerr (1977), Turner and Martin (1979), and Willis (1979).

Part of Kerr's questionnaire, returned by 374 teachers, administrators, and media specialists from elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Washington, asked respondents to indicate the importance of the media specialists' role in technical and informational services and instructional development activities. Informational services were perceived as being the most essential, followed by ID services and technical services.

While no significant differences were found between the groups at any level in the evaluation of the ID elements of the media specialist role, both teachers and administrators at the elementary level showed more interest in having the media specialist involved in ID than the media specialists did. Kerr interpreted the lack of extreme opinions on the ID role as suggesting that acceptance of this role is influenced not only by teacher and administrator expectations, but also by the attitude of media specialists.

Kerr also measured role-taking ability, the quality of seeing problems from another's viewpoint, which could also be called empathy. He found this to be strongly correlated with teacher acceptance of ID services and, in addition, found that media specialists demonstrating this ability were more positive about assuming an instructional development role.

Turner and Martin's study, currently being replicated in California (Turner, 1981), included returns from 187 K-12 media professionals in Alabama and used 38 independent variables from environmental and personal factors with reported instructional development being the dependent variable.

They found a significant difference in the number of instructional development activities reported by media specialists in schools where teachers had released planning time. Other significant variables included the number of production equipment items available, number of professional journals read by media specialists, number of innovative teaching structures, media specialist competencies in design, traditional library skills, education, and production; empathy of media specialists, attitude of principals toward the media specialist ID role, and the media specialists' attitude toward ID. Reported competencies of the media specialist had the strong-

est relationship with reported instructional development. Budget variables had a low, but significant, relationship with the amount of reported ID activity. However, the researchers found that volunteer assistance in the media center from parents and students did not contribute to increased ID activity.

Willis, in a telephone survey of 72 teachers and 22 media specialists in Wayne County, Michigan, measured knowledge and practice of instructional design, media selection, and media utilization. Teachers scored at substandard levels in all three areas and, while media specialists scored higher than teachers in media selection and utilization, only 23 percent scored at a satisfactory level in instructional design.

Media specialists indicated that they had not participated on curriculum committees or in the ID process with individual teachers. Fifty percent of the media specialists reported unfamiliarity with the instructional design process.

Although Willis found that teachers who received help from the media specialist had higher instructional design and selection scores than teachers who did not, 56 percent of the teachers sampled did not receive help from their media specialist and 47 percent did not wish to have such assistance. Other findings were that while teachers considered the media specialist competent in helping them select an instructional medium, 81 percent did not consider the media specialist qualified to assist them in utilization. Similar findings have been reported by Kerr and other researchers (Stroud and Loertscher, 1977; Wood, 1977).

None of the three studies discussed profess generalizability, but, even if limited to specific populations, the research-based findings could be useful to building-level school media specialists considering ID. The following force-field analysis chart, derived from the studies, may help clarify readiness at the building level.

Force-Field Analysis

OBJECTIVE
Implement ID at Building Level

POSSIBILITY (Hindering Forces)

Media specialist competencies need to be updated

Media specialist focus not outward reaching, but on support roles and center's internal administration

Media specialist does not have time to read many professional journals

Media specialist cannot add to work load

Media specialist runs center with volunteer help only

Media specialist has no released planning time

Media center has limited production equipment

Media center has very limited budget

Teacher perception of media specialist limited to support role

Teachers have no released time during year for planning

Administrator does not perceive ID as media specialist role

School has traditional teaching structure

PROBABILITY (Helping Forces)

Media specialist skilled in design, education, and production as well as traditional areas

Media specialist views instruction as priority, demonstrates empathy through interaction in team teaching, in-service workshops, and curriculum committee

Media specialist committed to keeping informed via regular perusal of a variety of journals

Media specialist gives ID priority as best utilization of expertise

Media specialist has paid clerical and technical assistance

Media specialist has non-supervisory time for planning

Media center has variety of production equipment

Media center budget is adequate

Teacher attitude receptive to assistance, improvement

Teacher planning time is built into yearly schedule

Administrator supportive of media specialist ID role

School has innovative teaching structure, flexibility

As can be seen, the research-based list of twelve helping or hindering forces breaks into thirds with one third being within the control of the media specialist, one third related to the resources of time, personnel, budget, and equipment; and the final third to teacher and administrator perceptions, teacher planning time, and the instructional philosophy of the school.

To analyze the helping and hindering forces, questions such as the following can be asked: Does the media specialist have control over any of these forces and, if so, which ones? Can any of the helping forces be intensified and how? Is there a way to reduce the effects of some hindering forces? What new forces might be enlisted to help carry out the objective?

It is clear enough that a highly-motivated media specialist can effect some change. Such change could begin within the media center by using ID procedures to improve and integrate media skills with the subjects offered in the curriculum so that student motivation and retention are increased. However, it has been observed by a number of persons that a supportive administration is critical to the success of ID endeavors. Because of this, serious attention needs to be given to alternate ways in which a ground swell of demand might be created by enlisting new allies.

One alternative route would be to enlist a strong advocacy group from the ranks of other building-level media specialists who then could request in-service training at the district level. A larger group could be formed within state library and media organizations so that more conference programming and workshops on ID would be available for the media specialist. If large enough groups formed within state professional organizations, certification and master's degree programs in higher education

could be apprised of needs and numbers. If everyone along the way became convinced that ID is an essential element for the training and practice of the media specialist, it could take its place alongside media center administration as an important state certification requirement. With a cadre of ID-competent, convinced media specialists, the chances of generating new forces of support among teachers and administrators are greatly increased.

Other scenarios could be written, but, before ID in school media centers becomes a distinct possibility and certainly before it is the emphasis of school media centers, the majority of building-level practitioners must be reached with credible, persuasive answers to the questions, "What is it?, why is it?, and what will it do for me?"

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